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C O N F I D E N T I A L RIYADH 001804

SIPDIS

DHAHRAN SENDS,
STATE FOR NEA/ARP, PASS TO MARIA SISK

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/14/2018
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#)
SUBJECT: NEW SAUDI AMBASSADOR TO BAHRAIN

Classified By: Consul General Joseph Kenny for Reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. Former minister of Social Affairs, Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz al-Akkas, will likely be appointed to the much-coveted, high profile Saudi ambassadorship to Bahrain. Post does not know how soon to expect the appointment of the new ambassador. End Summary.

¶2. (C) In a discussion with Abdulmohsen al-Akkas's office manager, he confided that the well-connected former minister has been lobbying for the ambassadorship to Bahrain. He also said that after resigning as minister of Social Affairs in May 2008, al-Akkas quietly turned down an informal request to be ambassador to Ireland. Al-akkas has a close relationship with the powerful Riyadh Emir Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, which makes his desire to be ambassador to Bahrain a likely prospect. Because of the close and cooperative relationship between the Bahraini and Saudi ruling families, the Saudi ambassadorship to Bahrain is seen as a high visibility post that has traditionally been reserved for non royals.

Biographical Information

¶3. (U) Prior to his ministerial assignment, al-Akkas served as a member of the Majlis al-Shoura (Consultative Council), chairing the Foreign Affairs Committee. Before joining the Majlis he worked in a number of capacities at the Saudi Research & Marketing Group (SRMG), working closely with then-Chairman Ahmed bin Salman Al Saud (the late son of the Emir of Riyadh). SRMG is a large and prominent media conglomerate that publishes widely read newspapers such as Asharq Al-Awsat, Al-Eqtissadia and Arab News. Like so many Saudi ministers and ambassadors before him, he spent more than a decade of his early professional career with the oil giant Saudi Aramco, predominantly in the influential Policy Planning Department. He has been an active board member with the Chambers of Commerce in Saudi Arabia and has represented the Gulf Cooperation Council on several trade delegations to Europe, Canada, Japan and the U.S. He is a founding member of the National Society for Human Rights in Saudi Arabia (2004). He received a BA in economics and a MA in political science from Washington University at Seattle. He has been nominated as a PhD candidate in political science at the same university, though he has not completed this degree.

(Approved by: JKENNY)
FRAKER